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SEPTEMBER
1
1948

Vol. CCXV
No. 5620

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PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES · MEDIUM OR MILD · PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED



[NCC 041x]

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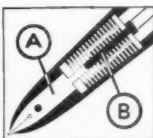
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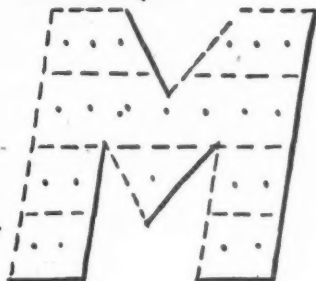
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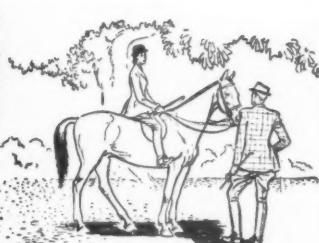
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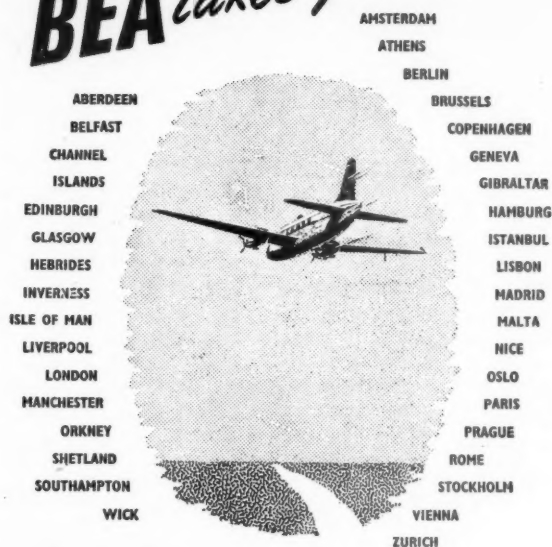
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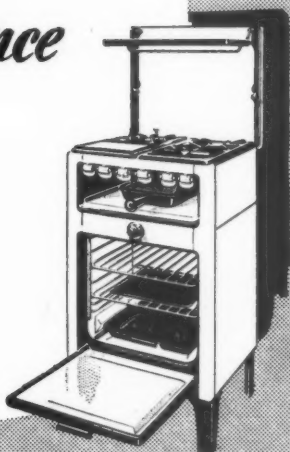
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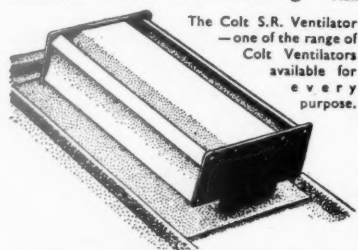
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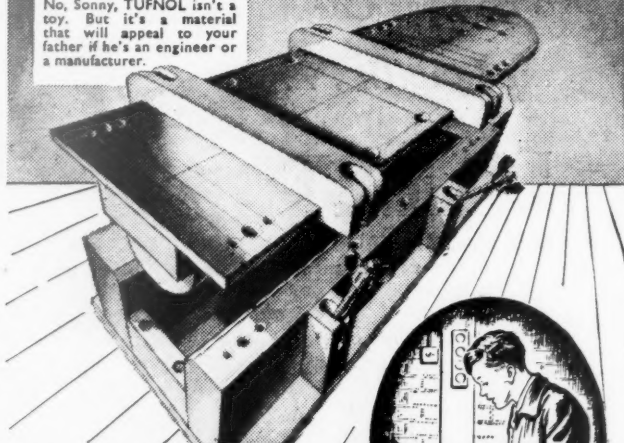
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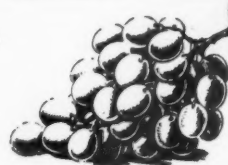
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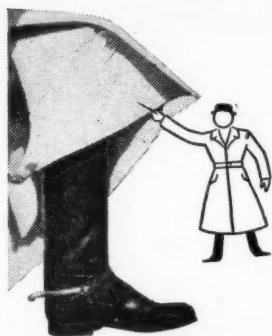
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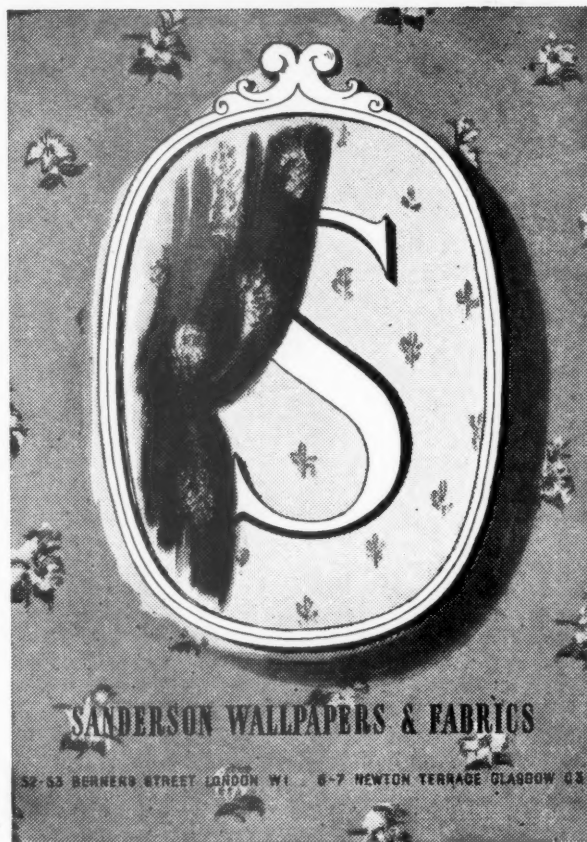
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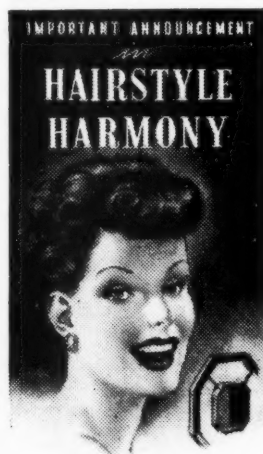
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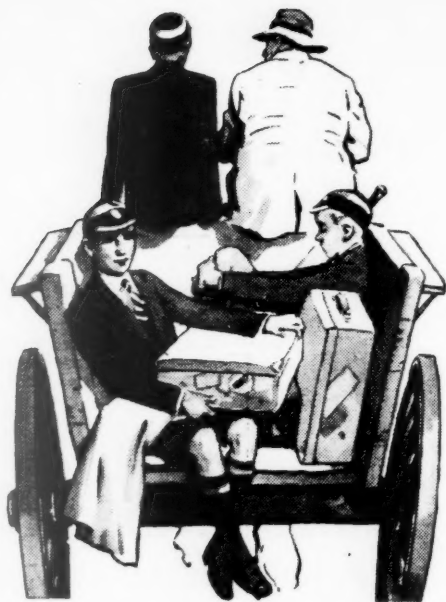
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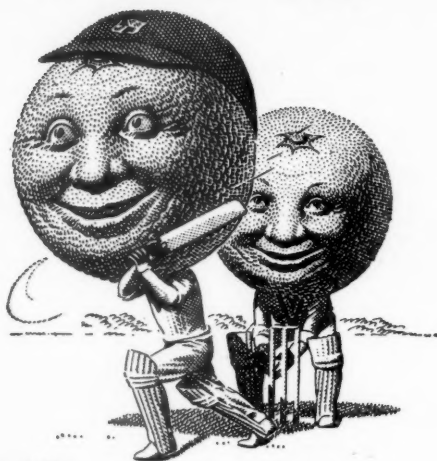
Weaving Tweed on hand-looms with the traditional skill for which the crofters of the Outer Hebrides are famous makes it impossible for Harris Tweed to be sold at a low price. But think what you get! Magic of moor and mountain in its patterns . . . long wear far beyond the life of other fabrics . . . most of all the inescapable rightness of Harris Tweed for every outdoor occasion.



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SQUASHES 3/- PER BOTTLE



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* Ian and his parents live in Chessington, Surrey.

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Please send me a copy of "Cradle Days." My baby is aged months.

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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXV No. 5620

September 1 1948

Charivaria

MANY American bars have television sets. Television is proving the most popular amenity in connection with drinking since Prohibition.

Britain is to sanction experiments with piloted supersonic planes. These will enable us to tear up the Air Corridor like so much waste paper.

Talk of fuel cuts again makes us realize how quickly time passes. This year the merging of summer into autumn has passed almost unnoticed.

The Russians seem anxious to preserve peace by all possible means except those most likely to preserve it.



"I have seen the most singular spectacle in London," says an American visitor, "and there was no charge for it." This must have been a man wearing a free National Health Service monocle.

Cardboard, says a trade report, is much dearer than it was before the war. Take a railway ticket, for example.

"Drivers must avoid emitting smoke and fumes while standing here."

Notice on Hayes railway station. It was seldom easier to avoid than it is now.

A star discovered by American scientists is estimated to be ten thousand times brighter than the sun. No doubt this would tend to prejudice its chances of escaping attention.



"COMING EVENTS

NO HASKETON WHIST DRIVE NEXT MONDAY."

Announcement in Suffolk paper.

We can hardly wait!

Herbalists are reported to be doing a bumper trade in herbal smoking mixtures. A popular blend is said to contain real Virginia creeper.

Housewives are urged to be patient. It is weeks yet before rations will have their seasonal reduction to enable the Food Ministry to make its customary pre-Christmas gesture of increasing them back to what they were.

Travellers say that the Eskimo is a perfect host. He never lets callers who have dropped in for the evening guess that the last few months of their stay are beginning to drag a little.



Smoke

"HAVE you," I asked the tobacconist, "any of this cure-all, this healer of wounds, this drier of the moisture of the brains, this unctious and oily kind of soot of which we draw the reek through our gulleets, and puff it out through the nose, this shameful imbecilitie, this *petum*, that causes us to roll the eyes, to gnash the teeth, to foam at the mouth, and to break into a frenzied dance, this poison, this benefaction, this *herbe du Grand Prieur*, this easer of toothaches and singing in the ears, this Indian tyrant of the British Kingdom, this fourth cushion of the divan of delight, this expeller of evil humours, this craftie device of Satan, this remedy against the Black Death, this new-found medicine, this heaven-sent gain, this biter of melancholie, this hell-dust, this gift of the Great Spirit, this sovereign balm?"

I could have gone on longer but there was a queue waiting.

He said he could let me have some pipe-tobacco but had no cigarettes. He was not a man with any historical grasp of his subject, and most of us indeed are very far from the fancies and passions of our ancestors in this matter of the use of nicotine.

"For thy sake, Tobacco, I
Would do anything but die."

said Charles Lamb. What a miserable confession! Thousands of men have suffered martyrdom for smoking's sake. When the conquest of Western Europe was complete and the rapturous juice had begun to stain the map of the Near East it was one of the principal pleasures of the Sultan Murad IV to hang and behead those of his subjects whom he found smoking. The Russian Czars (before Peter the Great was converted) used to slit the smoker's nostrils and give him the bastinado or the knout. I write merely as a candid historian, and not with the intention of putting any ideas into Sir Stafford Cripps's head. The West was always milder than the East, but the West was torn asunder by the great controversy. In the World Congress of Intellectuals at Wroclaw I note the remark of Mr. Fadiev about T. S. Eliot, Eugene O'Neill, John Dos Passos, Jean-Paul Sartre and André Malraux: "If hyenas could type and jackals could use a fountain pen they would write such things," and the reply by Mr. Olaf Stapledon that "we must all make a special effort to enter into the other point of view."

No such effort was made about smoking in the grand old days of the early fumifers. We may set against King James I's Counterblaste to Tobacco, "this filthy custom" . . . "in the black stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless," the beautiful lines of Edmund Spenser in "The Faërie Queen"—

"Into the woods thenceforth in haste she went
To seeke for hearbes that mote him remedy:
For shee of herbes had great intendiment
Taught of the nymphs which from her infancy
Her nourced had in trewe nobility:
There whether yt divine tobacco were
Or panachaea, or polygony,
She found and brought it to her patient deare,"

and I have often thought during the past few days of trying to smoke a few pipefuls of polygony. I find two Papal Bulls against smoking. Apparently people had begun to smoke in the Cathedral of Seville and even in St. Peter's. Urban VIII and Innocent X decreed immediate excommunication for this offence, and perhaps it was not surprising. But the dispute was in fact many-sided. Some doctors thought the new herb prevented cholera,

some that it sapped the body and destroyed the mind. Some potentates considered that it wasted their subjects' money, or rendered them unfit for war. Still more were annoyed by the fact that people were always burning down houses or towns by accident when they lighted pipes, which they did with a piece of red-hot coal. Afterwards, as the heresy persisted, it was found that it produced a great deal of revenue and the right to import or grow it could be conveniently sold to a monopolist. It therefore became increasingly difficult to know whether it was a virtue or a vice.

But personal prejudices were most remarkable. It is my own opinion that Shakespeare smoked heavily, and for fear of James I made no mention of tobacco in any of his plays. The link with Sir Walter Raleigh might have been fatal to him. He would not have cared about the anachronism because he had made Falstaff say: "Let the sky rain potatoes" in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and there were no potatoes in England when Falstaff was alive. Probably also the Globe Theatre was burned down by the poet when he was trying to light a pipe, and this saddened him.

Louis XIV hated smoking. Casanova smoked cigarettes. Queen Victoria was a nicotinephobe. But there is neither time nor space to tell here of the famous men and women who smoked, or hated smoking, to dwell on snuff-taking, and how it affected religion, politics and art. Not many dictators, not many statesmen, not many poets have chewed. There are fashions in these things. Schiller puffed heartily, but the smell made Goethe feel ill. Bismarck smoked cigars, but it is not known whether Napoleon III tossed away more cigarette-ends at Solferino or at Sedan. Probably the best and truest sentence about smoking is to be found in Molière, who puts in the mouth of Sganarelle the fine words:—

"Whatever Aristotle and all the philosophers may say, there is nothing like tobacco; it is the passion of all proper people, and he who lives without tobacco has nothing to live for. Not only does it refresh and cleanse men's brains, but it guides their souls in the ways of virtue, and by it one learns to be a man of honour."

What our present Government has to decide is whether a citizen can be a man of honour if he can only buy ten cigarettes a day. Or must he be guided into the way of virtue by the pipe alone? EVOE.

The Symbol

I HAVE a curious nightmare

In which I see

A fat dark man in a bowler hat and pyjamas
Glaring at me.

I think he stands for Inflation,

But I am not sure—

Maybe he represents a Savings Target,
Or the Threat of War,

Or the End of the Sellers' Market,

Or the Gambling Craze,

Or an Unofficial Strike, or the Profit Motive,
Or Port Delays,

Or the Drain on Dollar Resources,

Or an Absentee;

But why does he stand in his blasted striped pyjamas
Blaming me? G. D. R. D.



EATING THE LEEK



"But, dear, you know there's no easy way to make money—you've just got to keep on at it."

Not That it Matters in the Least.

OH, the sun is making magic on the sea-embroidered
sand
And the water's making music of her wild and
wayward will

And the world is warm and war-less and the sandwiches
are grand
And the sight of you is more exciting still!

Coloured bubbles come and caper to the waves' unruly beat
While the rocks lie back and wriggle in the sullage of
the sea

And the sunlight and the sea-light and the smell of potted
meat
Are the only things that count for you and me.

You can see the sponges squirming in the still, sequestered
pools
That are foundlings of the ocean they can echo with a
lisp,

And the porpoises proceeding in their solemn public
schools,
And the lettuces—so curly, cool and crisp.

You can find the quaintest sea-shells with the queerest sort
of mess
In the complicated catacombs of almost every one,
And the slightly shocking sea-weed with its slithery
caress
And the cider scintillating in the sun.

And it's here among the starfish I am wanting rather
badly
To embrace you with the breezes and the surf discreetly
sprayed,
To inform you that I love you and would perish for you
gladly
And to mention, just in passing, that the corkscrew's
been mislaid.

Register Now, and Avoid the Rush.

"NATIONAL Insurance?" I asked the uniformed porter of the office in Francis Street. He was standing very much at ease with the afternoon sun playing on the blue broadcloth across his shoulder-blades. To confront me before answering he turned his head through about fifteen degrees and his eyes through a wider supplementary angle. The manœuvre left his shoulder-blades unmoved in the zone of maximum warmth.

"What about National Insurance?" he said. He knew damwell what I meant. It was written all over me—across my flushed, harassed face, across my heaving chest and across the soles of my blistering feet. To the least observant passer-by I was clearly a man in sore need of a National Insurance office. This touch of peevish pedantry, coming towards the end of a long day's quest, soured me instantly. Biting sarcasm rocketed from my numbed brain. I wanted to say: "Oh, nothing. Just National Insurance, you know. National Insurance crowns the endeavours of a long line of reformers—the Humanitarians, the Fabians, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Sir William Beveridge and many others. It is the summit of all our striving, the goal . . ." But I hadn't the energy.

"This building," I said, with elaborate precision, "which seems to support you both economically and structurally—is it a National Insurance office?"

"Oh, you want the National Insurance," he said. "Oh, no, this 'ere's the M. of L." He began to fiddle with the waxen tips of his moustache.

"Then since I was directed here by your Kensington High Street branch via your office in New Bond Street perhaps you could tell me where I might find the National Insurance office?"

"Depends. D'you want to register in bulk or person?"

I looked behind me quickly, emulating a trick of Edward Everett Horton's.

"In person," I said. "There's just the one of me."

"Ah, but sometimes the employer gets 'em done in batches, same as you might take a box at the theatre like. But if, as you say, you're applyin' singly, then it's Chadwick you want."

"Chadwick?"

"Chadwick Street, 'course. The old exchange off Horseferry."

"Exchange?"

"The labour."

I said that I was entirely unfamiliar with the old labour exchange off Horseferry.

"Plenty of time to learn," he said, turning his eyes away to rest them.

At that moment a rather intelligent-looking young woman sauntered past—I raised my hat.

"Horseferry Road?" I asked in a voice so loud that the sun-bather could not possibly escape the calculated insult.

"What about Horseferry Road?" she said, without stopping.

I walked rapidly, blindly, with laughter crackling in my ears like a breakfast cereal.

The old labour exchange off Horseferry Road seemed more depressing than the establishments in New Bond, Kensington High and Francis Streets. Between thirty and forty men sat in rows of communal dejection before a long counter in an atmosphere heavily impregnated with carbon monoxide and horse-blanket. At one end of the counter an elderly official sat in eternal interview with a pugnacious lorry-driver. Two other clerks were

just leaning, though with the elegant alertness of the trained bureaucrat. Thirty or forty pairs of eyes scrutinized me as a palpable queue-jumper and glowered. I tried to look helpless, wilted my walk to a shamble and approached the counter nervously.

"Hey, you!" somebody shouted.

"I don't want to get in out of turn or anything," I said to the nearer Tower of Pisa, "but I'd be grateful if you'd let me know whether this is where I ought to queue for a National Insurance card."

"Got your form?"

I produced it.

"Identity?"

I fished out my card.

"O.K., you'll have to see the gentleman at the end there."

I augmented the rear row and began to twirl my hat between my knees.

"Move up, cock," said the man on my right. Two dozen times during the next hour or so he repeated this friendly injunction until at last I found myself at the extreme left of the front row.

"Well?"

I pushed my forms across the counter. The elderly clerk studied them suspiciously.

"You want Francis," he said, and turned away.

Something snapped. My voice, when it became coherent, seemed two octaves higher than usual and twice as powerful. I shouted something about losing votes, trying the patience of Job, and monumental inefficiency. I began to hammer the desk with my fist. And then I happened to notice that the leaning towers had straightened up and were exchanging significant glances. So I turned on my heel and stamped my way out. If the door hadn't been hooked to the wall I should have slammed it. It wouldn't budge.

Nothing would have induced me to return to Francis Street and its arrogant porter. I decided to write to my M.P. about the affair, and to accept registration only on receipt of a handwritten apology from the Minister of National Insurance. I had to get out of London quickly before I really lost my temper.

There was a man standing at the corner of Horseferry Road and Garbett Street, a well-dressed man with a yellow pigskin brief-case.

"The Underground?" I asked, smiling.

"What about the Underground?" he said. Hod.



"Stand up the boy who was smoking Marshall Aid just now behind the gymnasium."

At the Pictures

Kiss of Death—London Belongs to Me—Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill

LAST October, after a broadcast talk by Edgar Anstey on the documentary method in feature films, I made a note that *Kiss of Death* (Director: HENRY HATHAWAY) would

tion that complete silence (speckled, perhaps, with tiny ordinary sounds like the dropping of a spent match) is allowed to make its own point. The story itself is of a sympathetic crook (VICTOR MATURE) who at last turns informer for the sake of his children. It is obviously no fun to turn informer against a giggling killer of the kind here played by RICHARD WIDMARK; equally obviously it is no fun not to, either. Crime, in fact, does not pay (except the people who use it in fiction). The film has much good in it in spite of the forced ending, and makes skilful use of very strong suspense. It certainly won't bore you, and it won't make you feel you wasted your time.

The essence of a best-seller has been transferred to the screen in *London Belongs to Me* (Director: SIDNEY GILLIAT). The most easily detachable bit of Mr.

NORMAN COLLINS'S consciously Dickensian, consciously involved narrative—the part easiest to make into a film of reasonable length, working up to a climax—was the story of Percy Boon the garage-mechanic, his accidental killing of a girl, and his reprieve after trial for murder; so here it is, the other “rich characters” in the London boarding-house where he lives being in the picture almost entirely for the part of their lives that is involved with his. It's all well enough done, but it's all very superficial; it's all quite entertaining, but not much of it

will stick long in the mind. The personage most likely to stick is, as so often, ALASTAIR SIM, perhaps because he plays the most carefully “enriched” part: Mr. Squalles, the medium. The others—though the happy self-hypnotists who “lose themselves” in a story of this kind will never believe it—are little more than familiar types.

Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill (Director: LAWRENCE HUNTINGTON) is not long, and yet gives an impression of considerable length, while holding the attention throughout. I would emphasize that last clause, for to say a film seems long when it isn't is an easy way of damning it. This one is meant to convey the idea of time: the cumulative effect over a long period of innumerable petty irritations is part of its point, and that the point should be made in ninety minutes is a sign of success, not of failure. Many of you will know HUGH WALPOLE'S story of the two schoolmasters, the one set in pathetically frustrated middle age and the younger newcomer he sees spoiling all his hopes; the film probably blurs many of the undertones of the novel—it's many years since I read it—but the basic situation is established well, and I repeat that one's attention is held throughout. I write before the appearance of any other notices, but I will guess that I'm showing almost unequalled restraint in not making some kind of crack about Mr. Chips.

R. M.



(Kiss of Death)

RETIRING MATERIALIST

Asst. Dist. Att. Louis de Angelo . . . BRIAN DONLEVY
Convict Nick Bianco . . . VICTOR MATURE

be worth looking out for. It has taken an unexpectedly long time to get here, and perhaps you will avoid it because it is another murder story; but you will be missing something if you do. No masterpiece, and rather spoiled by an easy and implausible “happy ending,” it nevertheless offers much worth seeing. Mr. Anstey mentioned it particularly as an example of a film without studio atmosphere, and I'm sure much of its strength comes from the fact that all the scenes, exterior and interior, of this New York story were shot (as a foreword proudly points out) “in the actual locale.” It isn't as good as *The Naked City*, which was similarly made on the spot, but it stands up to the comparison. One point that I don't recall having seen mentioned is the extremely sparing use of background music, which is rare enough to be specially effective in one or two spots (for example, to emphasize suspense in a night scene, and to mark the sudden transition to a radically different mood). Often one notices with approval and heightened atten-



(London Belongs to Me)

OBTRUSIVE SPIRITUALIST

Percy Boon . . . RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH
Henry Squalles . . . ALASTAIR SIM

Report to the People's Council

People's Deputy for the Zingrelian A.S.S.R. reports:

COMRADE - DEPUTIES! This year has been a memorable one in the life of our beloved nation. The peasants and workers of our dear A.S.S.R., numbering over 3,500,000 souls, are able to boast that in all their efforts they have acted as one man. Critics have claimed that we should have acted as more men, but we are not dismayed by the carping of an un-influential minority. The attainment of targets has been highly satisfactory and I am glad to report that at no time has the production of targets been so high as this season. The proportion of targets attained has been 105.7 per cent. which augurs well for the future. The Cloudberry and Melon Jam Collective, "April the First Red Currant," of the Workers' Co-operative at Krasnoyutsk have assumed the obligation to turn out one jar for each inhabitant of the State plus 4 of a jar for each .73 inhabitant of friendly States. The success of this scheme will depend much on the ability of our workers to finish the Gorsk-Polshchina Canal-in-the-name-of-Vassili Efremovich Zaslupov before the autumn. Undaunted by the diversion of our only River Strelinea 250 km. from our Republic borders, we have undertaken the project, approved by the Centkopolitorg, of transporting a reach of the White Sea to the canal area in sections where it will be hoisted into the canal bed and thawed. The gracious offer by the Central People's Council of the Baltinsk A.S.S.R. of the next three months' output of sky-hooks for this enterprise has been regrettably declined as we cannot put upon them in this way and must achieve rationalized glory in our own manner. (Applause.)

The Combined Leather and Footwear Co-operative is surpassing all previous records, despite an initial setback, when by a crushing majority the Stitching and Welting Brigade declared, for mistaken doctrinaire reasons, in favour of assembling only left boots. Their error was pointed out to them with the utmost clarity and quotations from recognized authorities, including Hegel's emphasis on thesis and antithesis as the prerequisites of rational synthesis. Their leaders have expressed the deepest gratitude for the people's realistic and far-sighted criticism. (Applause.)

Of the forty-one new schools projected thirty-seven are now complete,



"What the blazes is wrong with it now?"

and of them, in the two in which instruction is actually proceeding there has been an encouraging attendance by teachers and pupils alike. They are not dismayed by their having to come 50 km. across an arm of the Yatan Begh Desert, some of them on foot, and some of the more desperate by tunnelling.

The standard of political awareness among pupils is high, and last May we had to report that the members of the senior class at Slomsk Lower Normal School accused the headmaster of Trotskyist deviationism and had him liquidated. His deputy, Shock-Instructor and Hero-Pedagogue Azazian, immediately assumed command, having taken measures to liquidate the upper class as a precaution. (Applause.) The democratic method introduced, of allowing pupils to elect their own masters, has suc-

ceeded beyond all expectations. In the majority of cases they found in favour of appointing masters from among themselves, with the result that over the past trimester the percentage of boys with full marks has risen from .09 per cent. to 87.2 per cent., thus rebutting criticisms of the system voiced in the reactionary press.

In conclusion, I wish to report that now more than ever are the peasants and workers of the Zingrelian A.S.S.R. truly conscious of the destiny of their glorious Fatherland and State; we pledge ourselves to put out the utmost output per man-intake, to produce one Five-Year Plan at least every three months and to unite in the glorious struggle for the Enfranchisement of the Workers, Operatives and Labourers in the name of our great leader and teacher, under whose leadership and teachership . . . (Loud applause.)



"And we're only five minutes from the sea as the jet propels."

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

I WROTE this Fragment to use up the last of some notepaper my wife won in a competition for guessing the weight of a soufflé. What made this notepaper noxious in the extreme was that at the bottom of each sheet there was an Improving Thought in Gothic type and this made correspondents feel that we were aiming at their reformation and lost us several friends. Among these Improving Thoughts were: "Winsome Is As Winsome Does," "Far Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth" and "If You Save a Minute a Day, You Will Save a Week in Twenty-eight Years (Approx.)."

LA VIE AMOUREUSE DE TITE-LIVE.

(The scene is the study of the novelist FRANKLIN, who is being interviewed by Mr. MARRINGTON.)

MARRINGTON. A reviewer said of your last book, "Hextor Franklin poses inescapably the dilemma which faces the contemporary awareness; he is very definitely of our time." Could you comment on this view of your work?

FRANKLIN. It's my being so topical, that's what he's getting at. I always make my tales topical; people like to think "Oh, yes, I remember that," and then they want to read my next tale to see what that recalls. Another wrinkle is, always have two love plots, one rough, one smooth.

MARRINGTON. What do you think is The Choice Before Us, if any?

FRANKLIN. Back to Stanley Weyman or back to Jules Verne; that's the next step. Family Chronicles are out.

MARRINGTON. Er—could you say something about your methods of working?

FRANKLIN. I use a metronome.

MARRINGTON. You mean you have one on your desk as a symbol?

FRANKLIN. It keeps my output steady. Trollope did two hundred and fifty a quarter of an hour, but I have got up to three hundred and twenty-five before now.

MARRINGTON. You admire Trollope?

FRANKLIN. He didn't give his public enough variety. Dickens, now, he gave something for all tastes. There's a lot in a book like *David Copperfield*; I've read it twice.

MARRINGTON. What aspects of *David Copperfield* appeal most to your personal sensibility?

FRANKLIN. Well, just what I was saying, there's such a lot in it, town, seaside, country; it's well worth the money. Nobody would feel cheated if they bought it.

MARRINGTON. Perhaps we had better try another extract from a review. Carey Pringer said: "Unlike many of his fellow-writers, Mr. Franklin has never succumbed to the Circean blandishments of the millionaire Press, the slow stain of the film studio or the enervating embraces of the B.B.C. He has retained his integrity unsoiled, no mean feat in present-day conditions." Perhaps you could analyse for us the forces which have kept you clear of what the World considers "Success"?

FRANKLIN. Jealousy. Graft. Not knowing the right people. I've had to fall back on little tin-pot publishers you never heard of like "The Angst Press" and "Lamentations, London." They don't print more than five hundred copies and they never get a review into the mass circulation organs.

MARRINGTON. Surely, it would be to the minority, The Few, that you would appeal?

FRANKLIN. That's exactly what I'm complaining about. I have no grouse about my poetry—I'm just not good at it—but I do put everything a reader could want into my novels.

MARRINGTON. But for some critics your poetry holds even more than your prose. To me, these two lines sum up its quality:

"The apple-tree corrupt with blossom

Destroys the point of the friar in my bosom."

FRANKLIN. It's not fair to bring up my poetry against me; I said I was bad at it. I try to write poetry because I want to be a good, all-round writer, but I have never claimed to be able to live on it. These two lines show how things go wrong whenever I go in for verse. I could not find a rhyme for blossom and I hoped people would read on quickly to find what happens next and not notice it, and I know perfectly well the second line does not scan: I tried it over and over again on my fingers. I usually begin by filling in the words I am sure of and then jot down anything of the right length in the spaces until I can find something that makes sense. That's how "corrupt" got there. It was just a fill-in for a two-syllable word, but I posted the wrong draft and they printed it. What I wanted was something like "charmingly bedight" but it was too long. "Friar" of course, is a misprint for "briar." The poet is a sad sort of man and the sight of the tree cheers him up and takes away the thorns from his heart.

MARRINGTON. Really . . . one does not quite know how . . . one fumbles for a critical attitude . . .

FRANKLIN. You tell your readers to put my name down on their library-lists. Would you like a photo of me? Here's a good one; I'm smoking a pipe and playing trains with the nipper.

MARRINGTON. I think I see light. Douanier Rousseau . . . A modern Primitive . . . the Zeitgeist . . . too strong even for the printer . . . Mr. Franklin, may I rediscover you? Eureka!

FINIS

Features

BEFORE I delve into the possibilities of this comprehensive title I should like to go farther than any dictionary would dare and say that it is pronounced "feachers" to rhyme with "creatures." A little more realism about this sort of thing and we should have dictionaries putting "wot" in small type after "what" and being read for their dry humour.

I think we might start with two modern and concrete meanings of the word, the radio feature and the film feature. It applies also to those bits of the newspaper which are printed square instead of long, such as occur near the end of an evening paper and sometimes turn out to be a short story, but only rather technical readers talk of newspaper features. Radio features are better known as such; they consist of information divided into different voices and darned into more socks of more quiet homes than perhaps even the producers realize. As for films, no one knows the exact definition of a feature here, but it is quite safe to call two big films together a double feature programme, and very discriminating not to like it. People who don't like double-feature programmes are not, however, out to impress their friends, they are simple honest folk realizing dimly that you do not have lunch immediately after breakfast. People who say you do sometimes, on Sunday, will see the sense of the argument. I can hardly let the subject of Sunday meals go by without a word on the people who combine breakfast and lunch and spend much of the rest of the day wondering whether the morning is the afternoon or the afternoon the morning.

Next I come to some of the features of life. Let us take first an extraordinarily small example, the loop in the cord that goes round traditional dressing-gown sleeves, and see where it gets us. Absolutely nowhere. A rather bigger feature of life is ink; look at the care with which the lid is put back, the effect with which it is spilt, the desperation with which it is found to be used up and, when written with, the way it can only be dried by being blotted or waved about or left, or, on a cheque handed across a counter, by saying with a nice smile that it is a bit wet.

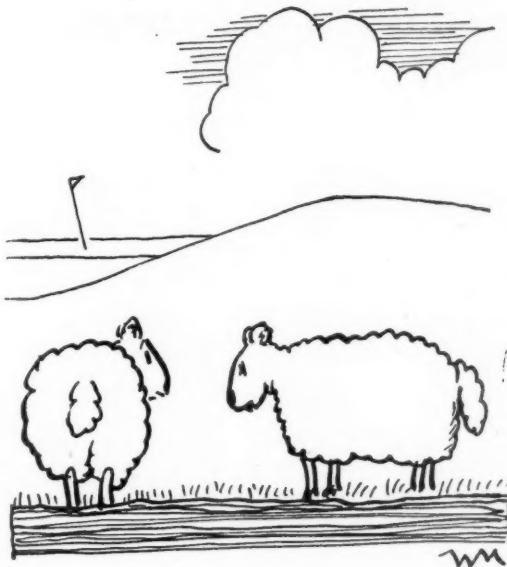
I must say something about plates, which may be classified into soup, dinner, pudding and side, and indeed must be if they are not to topple over—just a reminder how my readers feel when they have several people to dinner and, having made them something special and mushy for pudding, find themselves between courses out in the kitchen rounding up the right number of the least differing kinds of the best-sized plates. Another thing about plates is the inability of fetchers of single plates to bring in the size the asker had in mind. Historians say they would consider this the origin of the proverb about doing a thing yourself if you want it well done, were it not that they can think of so many other possibilities.

Many of my readers have at some time held in their hands a lease, by which I mean a double sheet of thick buckled paper typed or printed with double spacing and ending with a big blob of red paper sealing-wax, and told themselves that if anything is a feature of life it is the legal document. Leases are read at certain well-defined times in tenants' careers; besides the beginning and the end of what legal documents, and quite ordinary tenants too, call a tenancy, they are suddenly thrashed about for and brought out of desks to prove some point of conversation, and during a tidying the easier bits may be read as reading.

The English of legal documents is, as everyone knows, unlike any other English, the nearest thing in appearance, if looked at some way off, being a long and breathless letter typed in double spacing with sudden words in capitals and no punctuation. Legal documents do not have commas or semi-colons, a fact the public is well up on, having read why somewhere, but it is not so generally realized that legal English owes its character as much to its short words as to its long, especially if you count "hereinafter" as the short word it morally is. The effect of legal English on its ordinary readers may be best seen when one of them reads a piece aloud. It comes out as a monotone with an occasional slope up and down, with the capitals shouted and some desperate breath-drawings, and has never yet made anything clearer to anyone listening. Legal English is in fact meant to be read, with someone helping by pointing. Hence, say philosophers, the double spacing.

It has occurred to me that I have said nothing about features in the sense of a person's eyes and nose and mouth; and I should just like to remark on those eager and amazed comparisons made between very young people's eyes and noses and mouths and the corresponding family features. Here is a side of life as well documented with jokes as is the income-tax demand side; and, like income-tax demands, these eager and amazed comparisons are more than a match for their jokes in the way they go on happening.

ANDE.



"I wish they'd be more careful—that's the second golf-ball I've eaten to-day."



The Latest

[“An exhibition of Fashions for Men will shortly be held.”—*Press*.]

BROTHERS of mine whose days have long been drear,
Who seek, and vainly seek, for something new,
I bring you tidings eloquent of cheer,
Change is before us, and a good job too.
Soon will be held a Show of Manly Raiment
(Reverberate, O drums, and trumpets, blare)
Which will instruct you for a modest payment
In what the well-dressed man may safely wear.

Here will be models in the best of taste,
Novel in cut and rich in colour scheme;
Observe the lapel, note the well-turned waist
And trousers to fulfil the poet's dream.
Gay is the hosier's craft and, for that matter,
Hattings and neckwear cannot be ignored,
And, as a detail, if you're growing fatter
Mark how the youthful line may be restored.

And cheerly you may lounge while round the place
The young male mannequins pass to and fro
Displaying this and that with sinuous grace
Dight in pure symmetry from top to toe,
And you, at ease, will delicately finger
Each brave material till the Show moves on
To its full close—and then a little linger
Peopling the void with shadows newly gone.

Many, unless I err, will hear the call
(Rattle, O drums; and trumpets, blare aloud)
And let us hope there'll be a good large hall
Built to accommodate your eager crowd.
So, at the worst, you'll contemplate the New Look
And, for the moment, show a nobler port,
Reflecting darkly how improved might you look
Were't not for cash and coupons. Both are short.
DUM-DUM.



THE T.N.T. PARTY

Mainly for Craftsmen

NO great mathematical genius is needed to understand that a gate which is even an eighth of an inch larger than the aperture it is designed to close will in fact resolutely decline to do so, and instead will bang listlessly about where the wind wills. The gate I have in mind is one of the most temperamental pieces of carpentry ever fashioned by the hand of man. Unless it has just been subject to professional attention it is never the right size, being either too large, when it flaps, or too small, when it is equally useless because the two parts of the latch refuse to fit together. It is only a small gate compared with some I could mention, but if I tell you it admits to the side door a constant stream of bakers, milkmen, tramps and other valued friends of the family, and that when left open it also admits to the vegetable garden hordes of cows, gipsies' horses and huge black dogs, all of which stick their faces through the window of my study and frighten me out of my wits, there will be no need to stress its strategical importance. At the period now under review this gate was decidedly too large.

"It has become swollen in the August monsoon," I said, "and who shall blame it? The first remedy that occurs is to light a fire beneath it and dry it out, when it would logically contract to its proper size. Logic and fire, however, can seldom be trusted together, so if you will kindly collect all the tools which can be found we shall have to devise some more round-about cure."

"Don't you think we'd better send for Mr. Pook?" they asked. "It's always so awkward having you maimed."

This was simply callous talk, and it only whetted my determination to bring the gate to reason along my own lines. Apart from dictators and economists and so on, the male world seems pretty evenly divided between men who have an uncanny power over material objects and those who have absolutely none at all. That I am in the latter camp is not for the want of trying. When I was but a little lad I used to hoard all my pennies for beautiful shiny tools with which I dreamed of building book-ends and step-ladders and even models of St. Paul's, but the more I savaged the wood the less it resembled the thing I thought I was making, until at last either a great knot fell out, utterly ruining the plan, or else the chisel

slipped and cut me to the bone. It was infinitely pathetic, the way this race between the knots and the chisel was generally won by the chisel.

While they were going back for the axe, the sledge-hammer and other implements of heavier calibre I examined the gate from every angle. I tried to view it with the masterful confidence of Mr. Pook, who has only to look at the gate to make it behave.

"One method," I said, "would undoubtedly be to build another gate of the right size and dry this one out in the hot cupboard as a spare. The drawback is that for some appreciable time we should probably be without a gate."

They agreed this would be unsound. "Another, which might appeal to the unwary who do not allow for the infinite malice lying dormant in all inanimate matter, would be to shift the latch-post slightly to the west. The latch-post, however, is firmly glued to the end of the wall, and of all people we have reason to know what a feeble excuse a wall will seize on to fall down."

"We could screw a spring on the gate," they suggested.

"If we had such a spring," I said, without wishing in any way to damp the enthusiasm of youth. "Yet another plan would be to take the gate off its hinges and plane its leading edge. The trouble about a plane is to know where to stop, and also to be able to. It is a strangely gripping weapon. I once took a plane to the banisters to remove a small excrescence, and do you know—"

"Let's try violence," they urged, offering the sledge-hammer.

"I don't know what Mr. Pook would say," I murmured, "but one is surely justified in thinking that if hit hard enough the gate-post should withdraw just a little?"

I should have known that gate-posts in the country are like icebergs, and keep at least three-quarters of themselves below ground. None of the blows I now rained freely made the faintest impression, except of course on the paint.

"It's the plane or nothing," I cried. "Off the hinges with the patient!"

I am not very good at carving bread or birds or anything like that, and the plane sensed this almost before we had started. For half the stroke it cut exquisite little curls that might have come out of a hairdresser's advertisement, and then it dived deep into the gate to remove chunks about the size

of a manual worker's ration of Old Red Soapstone. It meant that I had to go to and fro rather a lot in an effort to attain symmetry.

"We craftsmen lack the staying-power that we had," I observed, standing up and mopping my brow, leaning against the gate-post the better to do so. Immediately there was a loud report, and in a cloud of ancient wood dust the post went down. So did about ten yards of fence of which apparently it had been the sole support. And so did I.

I remained on my back, partly because I felt bitter at the way old stories were re-told, and partly because I felt fairly certain I had broken my back. But noting how the gipsies' horses were gathering like vultures on the common, I kept my head.

"Communicate with Mr. Pook," I whispered. "His number is scribbled on the tool-box." ERIC.

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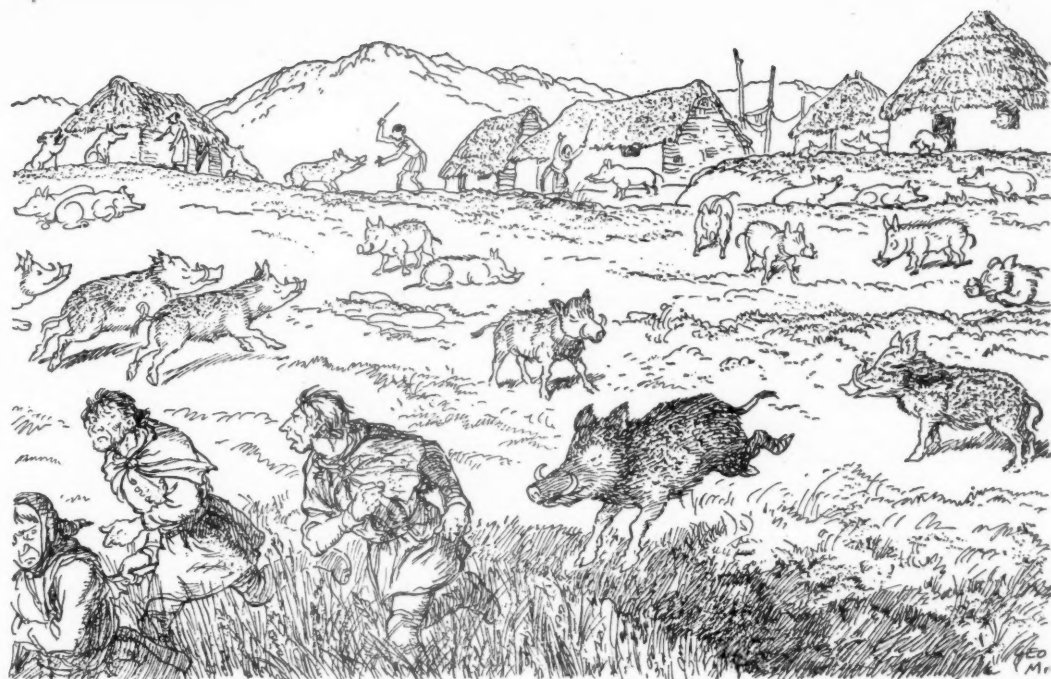
Letter to a Disc-jockey

DEAR VOICE,—First let me say that I'm sure you never call yourself a disc-jockey, either in conversation or on your National Health forms, but that is what my American magazines would call you, and I can't think of any other short way to describe a man whose gainful employment is taking up where one gramophone record leaves off and talking until the next one goes on.

In the old days the refreshing thing about a programme of gramophone records was that it was a programme of gramophone records. We were told the titles, of course, unless we very particularly wanted to know one, when we sometimes weren't; but we didn't get a course of personal lectures before and after each one. The records spoke for themselves in those days; now you speak for them, and round them, and about them, and about a heap of other things which are nothing to do with either you or the records. You speak with syrupy intimacy, murmuring into my own, my very own individual ear, and so close to the microphone that I can feel your moustache tickling. I don't like it, and I'm always telling you that I don't like it, but you don't pay any attention. Have you any idea, I wonder, what sort of a conversation we had between half-past eleven and a quarter to midnight last night, you and I?

You (quietly intimate, just the two of us). Hallo, there. . . .

Me. Oh, shut up.



"I think it's high time they took wild boar off the ration."

You. You're going to enjoy the records I've found for you to-night.

Me. That's for me to say.

You (huskily). Their keynote is peace, tranquillity, and the hushed enchantment of—

I missed the rest of that bit, not that I cared, because my bathroom water-pipes suddenly began to go *Dugga-dugga-dugga-dugga* DOM! DOM! DOM! DOM! *dugga-dugga-dugga*. . .

You (when they'd stopped) . . . when all Nature seems at rest, and that old Sandman—

Chop - chop - chop - chopper - chup - chipper-chup-chipper-chopper-chopper-chopper-chopper-chopper-chopper . . .

But that wasn't your fault. You couldn't know that every night at twenty-five to twelve the motor-cycle starts up outside the newsagent's shop round the corner. It went on until nearly the end of your first record, making up its mind to let its clutch in and clear off.

At the end of the record you sighed.

You (sighing). Do you know, I really think that's one of my favourites.

Me. What's your favourite got to do with it?

You (out of this world). It has that quality of—oh, I dunno—you know what I mean, don't you?

Me. No. I haven't the least idea what you mean.

You. . . . It's pleasant, chatting to you like this.

Me. Liar.

You. Sort of cosy.

Me. In a pig's eye.

You. And talking of cosy—why not turn that light down low?

Me. My light doesn't turn low. Only out.

You. Snuggle down in that big old easy-chair . . .

Me. I happen to be sitting on a divan, if it's all the same to you, with my spine against a sharp bookshelf. What's the next record? Get on with it.

You. . . . Let your head go back, relax . . . that's more like it. And forget that silly old detective story you're snoozing over. . .

Me. It isn't a detective story, so yah. It's the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, small ads. And I'm not snoozing over it, I'm—but what the heck business is it of yours?

You (throwing your mind back with an audible tinkle). I was remembering the other day—

Me (feebly). That's easy. Can you remember as far back as last year?

You. I sometimes think—

Me. You don't say.

You. Do you ever wonder—?

Me. No, never.

You (with breathy intimacy). But for folks like you and me—

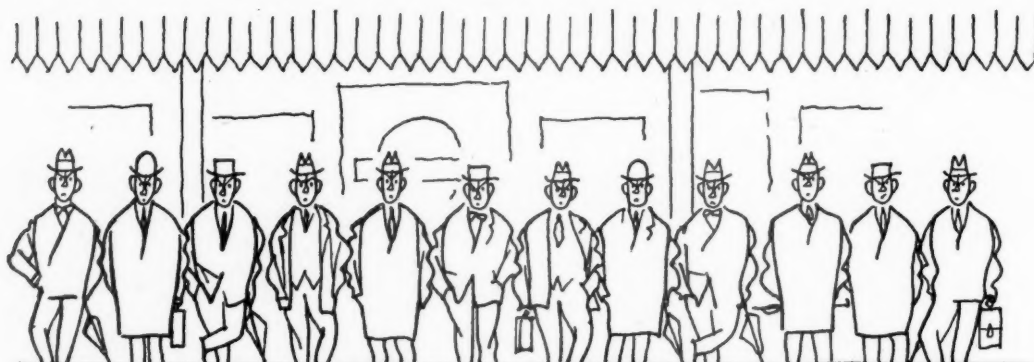
Me (shouting, covering the distance to the wireless-set in one bound). Dammit, how do you know what sort of a folks I am! Of all the infernal—!

You. And now listen—*tukk*.

And that, dear Voice, will be your defence: that I can always switch off if I don't like it. Don't worry, I always do. The annoying part is that I like the records, but I don't like the voice, Voice. It presumes too much. It is too knowing. It comes too close, and it tickles. It makes silly howlers, telling me I'm dozing by the fire when I'm really cleaning dead moths out of the lamp-bowl, speaking to me of the hush of moonlit meadows when four-engined aircraft headed for Heathrow are making my slates dance. It goes on and on. It . . .

But what's the use. I suppose it's my fault really. I ought to do what your other hundreds of thousands of listeners do, take it as a matter of course that however hard you work to convince me that you're talking to me alone, you're really talking to anybody, *everybody*, but J. B. B.

PORTRAIT OF A NATION IN CONSIDERABLE DISCOMFORT



Jones (on extreme left) is trying to ration himself by cutting each one into quarters, Smith (next to him) is trying to cure himself by chewing gum, Robinson (4th from left) is trying to limit himself to certain hours, Green (5th) is trying to limit himself to special occasions, White (7th) is trying to cure himself by taking some stuff called "Bancig," that makes them taste perfectly foul, Black (8th) is trying to do it by will-power alone, Brown (No. 11) is trying to cut down by carrying an empty case and relying on his friends, and Gray (No. 12) is trying to cure himself by repeating the words of "God Save the King" backwards whenever the craving attacks him: the remainder (Nos. 3, 6, 9 and 10) are not actually using any special system, but just can't get any.

The Sinuous Seine

AT 10.30 G.M.T. we sighted the Eiffel Tower on the starboard beam. A little later we sighted the great church of Montmartre. We took a vertical sextant angle of the Eiffel Tower. It is not every mariner who has done this. We were then about five miles distant, as our old friend the Crow flies. We made the height of the Tour 1,000 feet*. The *pilote* said it was *trois cent mètres*—about 990 feet. Later, from the Pont de la Concorde, we made it 1,062 feet to the top and 1,108 feet to the top of the long flagstaff. What is the correct answer we cannot tell you*: but we are clear that it is quite a high tower.

When the old Crow had only five miles to go before resting on the Tour Eiffel we had still about seventeen miles to steam by water. Hard things have been said about the "tortuous Thames", but, compared with the Seine, the Thames is as straight as a ruler. From Honfleur (*charmante!*), which corresponds geographically to Southend, to Rouen is sixty-seven miles (land) by water, and only about thirty-six by Crow. When we had done a hundred miles the lazy Crow had done forty-

* The Encyclopædia, we now see, says 1,000 feet.

seven only. About Rouen and Paris the river seems to go mad and ties itself in knots. From La Bouille to Sotteville is twenty-eight miles by water and under seven by air. At one point we were forty-three miles from Paris by Seine, and fourteen by Crow. From Honfleur to the Tour the Crow has only ninety-seven miles to do, we reckon: we did two hundred and five. Indeed, by one French map, with its tiresome kilometres and maddening sums, we make it two hundred and nineteen. The only other map we could acquire had no scale at all: and no guarantee goes with any of these figures. But, again, the general conclusion is firm, that the Seine is not a very straight river.

All the better—for what a wonderful river it is! There are only nine locks (or *écluses*, as the French call them in their queer foreign way) between Honfleur and the Eiffel, yet that is about forty miles farther than from Southend to Oxford. The first lock (the lock at Elbœuf having ceased to *exister*) is at Pitres, twenty-three miles above Rouen, ninety miles from Honfleur and ninety-seven above Le Havre. The Thames is tidal to Teddington only, about sixty miles above Southend.

And the tidal reaches of the Seine are almost as beautiful—well, let us face it, in many places, just as beautiful—as the Upper Thames. Much as we love it, we have never pretended that the lower Thames deserves big marks for scenery. From Southend to Woolwich is about thirty miles of flatness decorated by factories and power-stations, with a few hummocks in the background, and masses of mud at low water. Opposite Honfleur the petrol-tanks remind one of Shell Haven, but after that there is no resemblance. It is fair scenery all the way to Rouen—good hills or chalk cliffs on one side or the other, green fields and corn-fields and multitudinous cattle, seductive little towns with high spires and placid water-fronts and the Café de France, gay with geraniums, inviting the mariner to *alimentation* or *dégustation*. The tide flows strongly and there is a big rise and fall, but one never sees any mud. We do not know how this is arranged.

There are other things that Father Thames might envy—and some that he could learn. The Seine has nothing so good to look at, so cheap to run, as the London River sailing-barge. But,

apart from that perishing breed, in London River the tug is king, and nearly all the stuff is carried in lighters or "dumb barges", which cannot move without a tug ahead of them or a tide beneath them. In the Seine you do see tugs with a long tow of dumb barges (*péniches*)—and we saw one tow at least a quarter of a mile long. But the king of the river is the *bateau "automoteur"*—the motor-barge. These great craft are independent, having powerful motors, and highly efficient. They are more than a hundred feet long—beam about twelve feet, we judge—and can carry more than three hundred tons of coal. You see no sign of a rope upon them: all the work is done with long warps of soft flexible wire which coils as easily as a rope and lasts much longer. Two modern anchors protrude from their round strong bows, and there is generally a stern anchor as well. They are not so gay as our canal-boats, but they carry small house-flags at the stem-head, and have an occasional red heart or diamond. The captain, with his wife and children (pretty numerous as a rule), lives aboard but with much more space than our canal-boat families have. Some keep chickens, and rather coaly hens walk about on the cargo in the locks, producing, it is presumed, black eggs. Many of the *capitaines* are *propriétaires* also. These craft are not sea-going, but they are as much at home in Belgium and Holland as in France. Conflans, where the Oise joins the Seine (an unimpressive union), seems to be the Clapham Junction or Brentford Lock of the river, and half a mile of barges, many "bottoms" deep, can be seen. Here they change remorqueurs and buy supplies ("remorquer" is a characteristically long French word for "tow"). The London River lighter has a lot to be said for it: but a lot of craft like these, independent of tug or tide, would save a lot of time, toil—and treasure, perhaps.

It must always be embarrassing for Englishmen to steam up the Seine, especially if they are rash enough to study the guide-books. It is worse now. Before we entered the river we went from Ouistreham along the canal to Caen. We read again on the slab which marks the tomb of Gulielmus the Conqueror—"DUX NORMANDIAE REX ANGLIAE"—and felt again an unworthy sense of resentment. Up the river it is quite the other way. As we anchor off some charming corner and one admires the view, someone is sure to read out a bit about some frightful act of aggression by the English some centuries ago. At Rouen one has a rapturous meal by the open window,

and finds that one is looking down on the place where Joan of Arc was burned—by the English. At Rouen, too, of course, the ship lies by the ruined waterfront, the work of the English-speakers in the last war. One leaves Rouen with relief, because of Joan of Arc and the rubble and the ruins—also because the shipping is so thick it is no place for yachts. But no sooner have you shaken off St. Joan than you have King John at your heels. For the next stop is delightful Les Andelys. There the frowning Château Gaillard was built by Richard Cœur de Lion and lost by King John, after a characteristic bit of murder at Rouen: and the next time it was lost was the last of the English invaders in Normandy. One steams on, a little self-conscious: and now every new or temporary bridge is a reminder of the violence of the English-speakers. True, the bridges were broken to beat the Boches, but break them we did: and what are the French saying now? Perhaps they are saying that it was unnecessary, as they say, it seems, of some of the sad damage at Caen. Well, it is pleasant to record that we saw no signs of unfriendliness or resentment (except at one place—and that used to have a bridge). Our great ship wore the White Ensign. They seemed pleased to see that flag, and when we waved they waved again (excepting, of course, the anglers, to whom all moving vessels are enemies).

Still, it was pleasant to come to Paris and see no broken bridges, and, except at the great Renault works, no trace of war. (There is something to be said, when it is over, for being "occupied".) What a lot of bridges—two to a mile! What good bridges—but how thoughtlessly low! For our tall ship must be about the tallest ever to have penetrated to the heart of Paris. Many bridges looked quite impossible: but the *pilote* knew his job, and all were passed. We came under Alma with a few inches to spare and made fast alongside the Place de la Concorde. And, if anyone knows a more thrilling way in which to arrive at Paris let him declare it.

All the way up, by the way, with our bubble sextant (a present from some nice chaps) we observed the sun, the stars, and Jupiter, and proved, from time to time, that we were in France. We had no map showing latitude and longitude (they seem to be unobtainable in France), so it was like being at sea, no one could ever say surely that we were wrong, except one day when we put the ship the other side of Paris. Our last observation put us in Latitude 48° 51' N., Longitude 2° 17' E.: and if

that is not somewhere in Paris you can try yourself.

No bother, by the way, at the Place de la Concorde about tides. Plenty of water alongside. There are many good arguments, maybe, against the Thames Barrage: but what a different place it would make of London! The second night, worn out with walking and the vain *chasse de taxis*, we took the little motor-boat and chugged up under ten bridges to the Islands—past the Assemblée National, past the Louvre, past Notre Dame. We ate well at a famous restaurant, high up, looking down on the Cathedral and the Islands; and came back to our ship under the bridges and the stars. Shall we ever do the like in London? Probably not. A. P. H.

Under Sixteen

MY daughter's age is 13·4,
On which exclusive grounds
She may not go abroad with
more
Than five and twenty pounds.

My daughter is exceeding tall
And of enormous weight.
This does not weigh with them at all—
The girl was born too late.

Since her nativity's not right
It seems she'll have to bant
Although she has an appetite
Would shame an elephant.

Although her dreams are long and deep
She must arise at three
For she can but afford to sleep
Two-thirds as much as me.

She shall have water in her wine,
One sheet instead of two,
Her bath must be less hot than mine,
Her *truite au bleu* less blue.

She must not use so many lights,
Sit fully on a chair
Or take the lift so many flights
Or breathe as much French air.

The *très méchants hôteliers*
Who charge her just as high
Don't understand our British way—
And nor darned well do I.

JUSTIN.

"I know of a 30-pounder caught in the Solent, and a 33-pounder was taken off Hastings by a woman. They all have unpleasant teeth."—"Sunday Express."

Ah, but it's their tongues you want to watch.

IN some ways, returning to *Edward, My Son* is like revisiting an ancient monument in an uncommonly fine state of preservation. The beauties are unchanged; so are the flaws. Here we are out of the "clang and dust" of the competitive theatre: the MORLEY—LANGLEY play, under its mellow patina of age—fifteen months at least—is sure of its train of respectful visitors. When I returned to it one or two new guides were in attendance. *Arnold*, the Father, is acted now by Mr. JOHN CLEMENTS, who has, naturally no doubt, a less detailed idea of the man than Mr. ROBERT MORLEY, who in two senses created him. MORLEY is soon to play his *Arnold* in New York; Broadway will hear a voice with the texture of rumpled silk, see a bright, inquiring eye, and note a walk that manages to combine a stroll with a strut. Mr. CLEMENTS does not build the part so elaborately, though he wears the astrakhan collar and the black homburg with an air, and can readily establish the fellow's ruthless charm and his brimming lack of scruple. (What can you do to prevent your son's expulsion from his school? The answer is simplicity itself: you buy the place over the Head's head and magnanimously hand it back to him.)

Even if CLEMENTS is not the character that MORLEY was, he is a sound heart for a sound play, and he has a matching companion in Miss PAULINE LETTS who accompanies him down the years from Brighton (1919) to Charles Street (1947). True, she lacks Miss PEGGY ASHCROFT's subtle way with the dipsomania of the last scenes: as Miss LETTS plays her, *Lady Holt* is here a more conventional figure of the stage. In the early and middle scenes she is first-rate, whether confidential over *Edward*, her son, in the Brighton cradle-song, or facing *Arnold* in the hotel bedroom at Alassio. The adaptable secretary is now Miss IRENE WORTH, perfectly at home in her Islington flat and among the splendours of the Holt office. Is *Arnold*, by the way, cunningly avoiding a too awkward change of scene when he suggests copying the headmaster's room at

At the Play

Edward, My Son (LYRIC)—*The Haunted* (TORCH)—
So What? (GATEWAY)

Graingerry School: "I'm moving into a new block of offices. . . . This is exactly the sort of room I'd like to choose for myself."

The rest of the cast is much the same, from Mr. JOHN ROBINSON as the straight-speaking doctor who knows *Edward* from the cradle, to Mr. D. A. CLARKE-SMITH as the blackmailed headmaster, and to the little detective in the bowler hat (Mr. JOHN ALLEN),

as possible. This one, by name *Francis Cornwall*, haunts in Sussex. We gather that he died in 1820, and for reasons of his own remains earthbound: whenever anybody arrives at the cottage, the spectre calls, whispers peevishly about suicide, and in general makes of himself a dire nuisance. So he does in the present play when he has a chance to interfere with the lives of a surgeon and the surgeon's wife and brother whose nerves are not well-tuned. There are some highly improbable domestic alarms, with the ghost—played by the author—gliding grumpily from person to person and moaning at them in a low-spirited manner that in the West would be called "teasy." During the last few minutes, to the relief of all, he gets a companion a trifle less lugubrious, and the play ends, if not with a bang, without a whimper. Agreed, it has an idea; but for the most part it is uncanny in the wrong sense: in spite of some sincere and pointed performances by Miss PEGGY LIVESEY, Mr. ALAN WHEATLEY, and Mr. IVAN CRAIG, we seldom feel the scalp prickling.

After this, *So What?* at another little theatre, the Gateway in Westbourne Grove, is firmly matter-of-fact. The scene is the back parlour of a greengrocer's in the East End: the idiom is theatre-Cockney, and all troubles can be resolved with a nice cup of tea. If the ghost of *Francis Cornwall* had moved drearily into that cosy back-room, someone would have reached without hesitation for a cup and saucer. The play is gentle and rather timid. Neat performances by the author (Miss MOLLY VENESS) and by Miss CAROLINE KEITH as a melancholy terrier of a neighbour, go with the sincerity of the writing. Miss VENESS has a quiet way with her; but she should not let her people hail each other constantly by name. There is, on the whole, too much in a name if you have it tagged on to every other sentence.

J. C. T.



[The Haunted]

"WRETCHED, RASH, INTRUDING GHOUL . . ."

Francis Cornwall, a Ghost . . . MR. NICHOLAS STUART GRAY
Andrew Shepley . . . MR. ALAN WHEATLEY
Erica Shepley . . . MISS PEGGY LIVESEY

who waits patiently for evidence under the Islington lamp. The Ancient Monument is pleasantly free, then, from damp and mould: what will it be like next year?

The Haunted, on what has been called with affection the bus top of the little Torch Theatre, is hardly in the same class. We have had already, so my spies report, a comedy about a blithe spirit. But the spirit in Mr. NICHOLAS STUART GRAY's piece is merely hang-dog. Coward's *Elvira* would tell him to put a kick in it: he has a doleful, flat-pancake, moping-misery way of gliding around the

with a nice cup of tea. If the ghost of *Francis Cornwall* had moved drearily into that cosy back-room, someone would have reached without hesitation for a cup and saucer. The play is gentle and rather timid. Neat performances by the author (Miss MOLLY VENESS) and by Miss CAROLINE KEITH as a melancholy terrier of a neighbour, go with the sincerity of the writing. Miss VENESS has a quiet way with her; but she should not let her people hail each other constantly by name. There is, on the whole, too much in a name if you have it tagged on to every other sentence.

J. C. T.

Underground Complaint

To the Manager, London Underground Region.

DEAR SIR,—So many million use the Underground every year that you take it for granted they are satisfied. Yet many of them go home with all sorts of little irritations, but having other things on their minds do not trouble to let you know.

I do not complain particularly about the rush hours, because it is not staggering which causes jams to-day, and jams, in fact, every day except Sunday when there are not so many people trying to get home for tea at once. But it rather adds insult to injury to remind passengers that on the Underground you stand for service.

I want to draw your attention to the "Way Out." Sometimes it is at the end, and this is all right so long as you know which end. It can be very confusing to be in the front only to find the way out is at the back and everybody else gets there first. You ought to print on the tickets against station names the letters F B or M to show whether to get in at the front or back, ready to get out. (The "M" is for middle, and when this happens it is also the "Way In," which ought to be avoided.) As a matter of fact I have found it a good plan to go out where it says "No Exit," these passages nearly always coming from somewhere. As they are less crowded, why don't you use them more?

Mention of passages reminds me that you have a nasty habit of naming stations by any old landmark which may be half a mile away. As a result passengers walk much of the journey which they paid to ride, some of it in endless tunnels although I suppose you would call it expensive walking, with an occasional ride and attractive advertisements. For short journeys it would often be quicker to walk as the crow flies on top. In any case, do you need such a strong draught in your passages?

You seem to forget that people who may not understand Geography are even worse underground. It is no good putting up arrows saying "Northbound" or "Southbound" for the benefit of people who do not know whether they are going west or not in Central London. Three hundred feet underground I couldn't care less how Westminster lies if my ticket says Waterloo (besides many other places I don't want). Yet on the Inner Circle you do not attempt to specify

"Clockwise," and strangers to London honestly don't know whether they are coming or have just gone otherwise.

I have never yet met anybody who can explain this Non-stop system some of your trains work. Many times I have let them go when I could have caught them, because I have never known that they were going to stop. That's a thing you cannot find out until it is too late, and certainly needs to be made plainer.

Another cause of lost tempers is the Automatic Ticket Machines. Where do all the sixpences go when the machines

go wrong? The only time I ever knew a machine to go wrong in favour of the public it issued two tickets for the price of one every other stake, but this still favoured the Company because one person could not go twice.

I expect you will suggest that if I am not sure of myself I should ask an official. All these automatic machines and signs replace most of the officials, and you don't get much change out of them. If you would order the few people who remain to mind the passengers instead of minding the doors we might get somewhere.

Yours faithfully,

S. SUMPWORTHY.





"Dammit—that's the THIRD pair of spectacles I've lost this week."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Walter Pater

IN *Walter Pater: Selected Works* (HEINEMANN, 21/-) MR. RICHARD ALDINGTON has included the whole of "Marius the Epicurean" and "Imaginary Portraits," most of "The Renaissance," and generous extracts from Pater's other writings. A few omissions may be regretted, especially the essay, in "The Renaissance," on Michelangelo, which contains a passage on death much simpler and more beautiful than the famous Mona Lisa fantasy. But this is a useful volume which comprises nearly everything of importance by a writer who deserves for various reasons to be transported in an omnibus (distasteful though he would have found the idea) through the perilous ways of the present to a future more in harmony, one hopes, with his bias towards what is ordered and gracious in life. In an interesting though uneven introduction, somewhat marred by the acrimony and dogmaticism which he notes as the usual faults of most critics, Mr. ALDINGTON shows how much of recent art and literature derives from Pater's æsthetic philosophy, as expressed in "To regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought" and in "What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions." It is a long road from "The Renaissance" to Surrealism, but it is the same road. Having indicated the right direction in which to travel, Pater turned round and resumed his melancholy contemplation of the serene and distant past. H. K.

The Housewife's Helicon

No real cook, however stringent the times, has ever looked upon "Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management" as wholly outmoded. But because an undomesticated generation, which thoroughly deserves what it

gastronomically gets, regards both writer and book as matter for guffaws, one is thankful to Mrs. Beeton's great-niece, Miss NANCY SPAIN, for reintroducing one of the finest in fibre and endurance of Victorian women. A society based on "the dependability of family life," in which a widower, marrying a widow, accumulated twenty-one children, made a secure and entertaining background for a beautiful and accomplished girl. At twenty, Isabella Mayson married Samuel Beeton, publisher, from her paternal home in the Grand Stand at Epsom. Sam was erratic and easily discouraged; though he made little of walking to his Fleet Street office if he missed his train at Pinner. Isabella became, to all intents and purposes, his partner; and her masterpiece was not her only publication to stave off his eventual bankruptcy. She died, working to the last, in child-birth at the age of twenty-eight. The generous enthusiasm of *Mrs. Beeton and Her Husband* (COLLINS, 12/6) is no more than her due; though actually the Fair Daughters of Albion, as M. Soyer called them, were not so ill-provided with pre-Beeton cookery-books as Miss SPAIN suggests. H. P. E.

A Delightful Book

An Apple a Day (CASSELL, 10/6), Dr. PHILIP GOSSE's reminiscences, is full of good stories and also of charm and atmosphere—a rare combination. Dr. GOSSE has rambled over a great part of the world, some of his travels having been taken in conformity with a rule he made early in life to go on a prolonged holiday whenever he failed in an exam. In Gibraltar he was arrested as a spy; in South America he climbed in the Andes and noticed on his return to lower levels that his Swiss guide was picking up stones from the roadside, in order, it turned out, to dispose of them to wealthy Argentines as fragments from the summit of Aconcagua. The little peculiarities of human nature, originating for the most part in an understandable desire to get something for nothing, form much of the subject-matter of this delightful book. In the first chapter Dr. GOSSE describes the many different kinds of patient he has treated on the panel. In another chapter he narrates his experiences among confidence men in Wandsworth prison. Travelling all over the British Isles to hear appeals against the termination of war-time pensions, Dr. GOSSE found a cheerful appellant harder to refuse than a mournful one, being unmoved by a lugubrious Irishman who claimed that he had been permanently damaged by the apparition of a ghost, but allowing the appeal of a jovial Irishman with a very bad limp which, when Dr. GOSSE caught sight of him later in the day, had entirely vanished. H. K.

Second String

The Prose of Edward Thomas (FALCON PRESS, 10/6) bears much the same relation to his poetry as Alice Meynell's essays did to her verse. It is more self-conscious, more *soigné* (for the art is less concealed) and more concerned with maintaining a precarious footing on deliberately selected heights than enjoying a congenial altitude. At its worst it is rather obtrusively given to Latinisms. Phrases like "sycamores solemnized the Cornish farm" would pass, you feel, better in poetry. What conditioned Thomas's prose was his resolve, up to the first world-war, "to live in the country with the freedom of an artist." This was—as his widow points out in her introduction to Mr. ROLAND GANT's enthusiastic and discerning anthology—in many respects an heroic choice. It involved the chooser in considerable hardship; and it was probably the making of the man who wrote "Adlestrop" and "Tall Nettles" and who would have written still better poems had he not

Under Observation

THOSE of my readers who are familiar with the Stoke d'Abernon method of Civil Servant selection will, I am sure, be interested in a somewhat similar experiment I have just carried out in my own home.

In my case, the post to be filled was that of jobbing gardener. The candidates were three in number: Maincrop, a wizened little stick of a man who spent hours leaning over my front gate, watching me with hurt, reproachful eyes; Foljambe, a rather more resourceful character who was constantly sending me photographs of himself sitting astride enormous marrows and holding—for some reason I have never been able to discover—a double-barrelled shot-gun; and Larsen, a morose Swede who insisted on wheeling my brief-case to the station every morning in his barrow.

Unwilling to make a snap decision which I might later regret, I called the three men together one Saturday afternoon and outlined my plan for a trial week-end. The potting-shed, I told them, would be at their disposal; light meals would be provided; they would of course be under observation from the moment they moved in.

They went away, muttering among themselves, but at five-thirty—the time I had fixed for the course to begin—they were waiting for me at the potting-shed. Maincrop and Foljambe carried neatly-rolled bedding; Larsen a flowered sponge-bag with a trowel protruding from it. I showed them to their quarters with a certain amount of trepidation.

The night passed quietly enough. There was an occasional burst of folk-song from Larsen, but at 7.30 next morning all three reported for breakfast looking fit and refreshed. Larsen had a small bruise on his forehead, but this, as Maincrop pointed out, had been caused by a subsidence of flower-pots during the night.

I watched the men carefully during breakfast for some clue to their characters. Larsen stared moodily at the hot-plate, muttered something that sounded like "What? No *smörgåsbord*?" and mooched off into the garden. Maincrop and Foljambe ate with a relish that, in an hotel or restaurant, would have warmed one's heart to see. Of the three, Maincrop impressed me as the most promising; he did at least tuck two-thirds of his table-napkin into the top of his shirt before beginning his meal. It was not until I was making a quick inventory of the linen after their departure that

I realized he must eventually have tucked the other third in.

After breakfast I set them a simple TEWT (Tactical Exercise Without Tools). Larsen's task was to remove the weeds from the front lawn; Maincrop's to lift a few rows of potatoes; Foljambe I set to making a marrow-bed. I put them on their honour not to make use of tools of any description and went indoors to prepare the questions for the afternoon's written examination.

I emerged shortly before lunch to find that Larsen had removed not only the weeds from the front lawn but also half the turf. When I remonstrated with him he went off into some incoherent story about the Swedish word for "weeds" being the same as that for "turf." While I was looking for a dictionary to confirm this he removed the rest of the turf. Maincrop, I learnt, had come over dizzy while lifting his second potato and had gone to lie down on Foljambe's marrow-bed. Foljambe was reading to him from a seed-catalogue.

I called them in to lunch with as much good-humour as I could muster. Larsen had recovered from his sulkiness and ate heartily. Maincrop and Foljambe, who were now inseparable, rather went down in my estimation by asking for a second helping of fish-pie. When I refused they began beating on the table with Larsen's fists, which were bigger than their own and consequently made more noise. I was glad when the meal ended and I was able to send them out into the garden for a short break.

After I had swept the dining-room floor I set the table with pens, paper and blotting-pads and called the men in to do their written examination. After warning them to write on one side of the paper only I retired to my invigilator's desk at the end of the room.

For some time there was silence, broken only by a verse and two choruses of a sea-shanty from Larsen. I had to reprimand Maincrop once for looking over Foljambe's paper, and Larsen twice for making a giant dart out of his blotting pad. When I came to collect their papers I noticed that Maincrop's and Foljambe's were identical in every respect, even down to the mis-spelling of the word *eschscholtzia*. Larsen, with whom I was fast losing patience, had carved his answers on the top of the table with a jack-knife; although, as he took care to point out, he had carved them on one side of the table only.

The examination concluded with a short visual test. For this the men sat facing the french windows while I ran quickly past outside carrying a different specimen of flower on each journey. Their task was to jot down the name of each flower in turn. When I rejoined them, a little out of breath, Maincrop and Foljambe confessed that all the flowers were completely foreign to them. Larsen complained that not only the flowers but also Maincrop and Foljambe were completely foreign to him.

Somewhat piqued by their attitude to the whole business I ordered them to proceed on a ramble and collect any interesting botanical specimens or edible roots they might find. They set off in high spirits, Larsen taking my bicycle with him. I then sat down to tot up the points I had awarded and select the winning candidate.

It might surprise you to learn that, after careful consideration, I gave the job to Larsen. The fact that he came back from the ramble with half a dozen hen's eggs may have had something to do with it.

World's End

WHAT is the world's end like?
Is there a fence or a wall?
Is there one moment a track,
Then suddenly nothing at all?

Is there a pillar engraved
"Here the World Ends"?
Snow and blizzard and ice,
Or shingle and sands?

Is there a railway siding
And a park for cars?
Can one go through a turnstile out on
a platform
And count the stars?

If you drop a penny over
Into that blue abyss
Can you watch it falling forever,
Tinkling down through space?

Do the starships come in to land
And the lithe moon-liners dock
Back from a cruise of the nebulae
Or a round of the Zodiac?

Is there a railed terrace
Where people may sit at their ease,
Leisurely gazing downwards
And sipping elevenses?

To Reassure You.

IN love, as in most other things, said the heading of the "Answers to Correspondents" bit in a weekly women's paper for which I once worked, the looker-on sees most of the game; and as wars and international crises can, I suppose, rightly be classed among most other things for this purpose, it is natural enough that we who have lived in Germany ever since the war finished should be rather vague about the current emergency. Apart from anything else, we always get our papers a day late, so we never know exactly how pregnant the latest silence from Berlin or the Kremlin is until it has been supplanted by another and quite different silence. Whatever the reason may be, at any rate it is assumed at home (or "in the U.K.," to use the usual official phrase of those "in this theatre") that we out here have no idea of the danger we are in, and may find ourselves in a Siberian salt-mine before we can say "Zdrast-fuitye, tovarisch!"

If I can do so without transgressing the Official Secrets Act, then, I would like to point out that we are by no means so unprepared as those in the U.K. think, and to reveal some of the precautions that have already been taken.

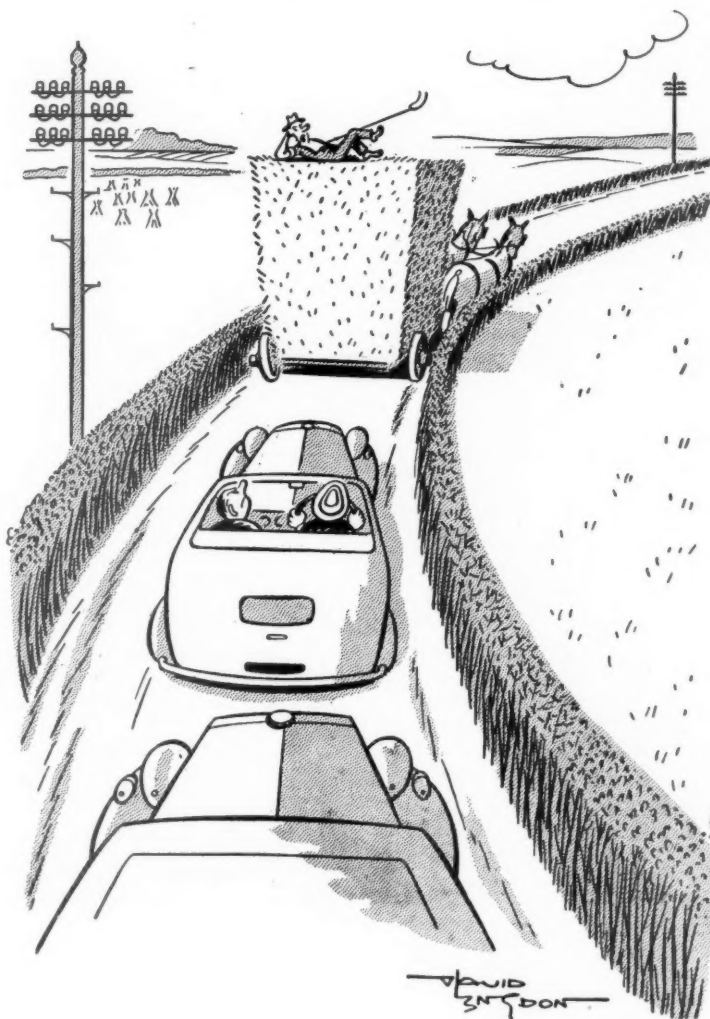
Perhaps the most significant is the replacement of Major Oaks by Major Derby in command of "C" Squadron of the Twenty-eighth Dragoons. "C" Squadron are located within a stone's throw of the Iron Curtain, if you can throw a stone a dozen miles, and will obviously have to take the first impact of any action that may develop. Major Derby came off his horse rather heavily in the Grade C Jumping at the — Horse Show (security!) a week or so ago, and will be unable to ride for possibly a couple of months. He is therefore well placed tactically in command of "C" Squadron, so that Major Oaks can ride Maiden's Prayer at the — meeting at the beginning of September without weakening the strength of our forces deployed against the Iron Curtain.

This move is given greater point by the additional circumstance that Major Oaks's batman contacted a Russian patrol verbally a few days ago and sold it a wrist-watch in exchange for a bottle of alleged schnapps. The schnapps turned out to be little more than motor-spirit diluted with its own volume of water. Major Oaks's batman was very indignant about the affair, even though he admitted that the watch had had its works removed before the actual exchange took place,

and it was thought in some circles that his continued presence on the frontier would lead to an unfortunate incident sooner or later.

Other troop movements have taken place which are almost as significant as this. Fusilier Bath and Fusilier Wells have been posted to the airfield at — (you will find the name in your daily paper) to help in the air-lift of chewing-gum to Berlin. An urgent demand came through for two men able to ride bicycles and having not less than three months' service left. Practically no soldiers in the British Army of the Rhine have three months'

service remaining to them, but intensive research revealed the existence of the two Fusiliers, and arrangements were made for them to be redeployed as soon as administrative details could be completed. Neither Bath nor Wells can actually ride a bicycle, but Bath is a smart, good-looking soldier, and Wells plays the female leads in the Loamshire Fusiliers concert party, so it is thought they may be able to fit somewhere into the airfield organization without difficulty. The Adjutant of the Loamshire Fusiliers has stated that he expects to be able to recast his local security orders without difficulty to make the



"Keep yer 'air on. You'll be wanting toast for yer ruddy breakfast, won't yer?"

best use of his depleted forces. He has also suggested having the Field Conduct Sheets of Fusiliers Bath and Wells stoutly bound in stiff covers for the benefit of the Camp Commandant of the airfield in order that none of the several dozen sheets involved may become detached. The Camp Commandant is understood to have made counter-proposals involving the use of loose-leaf equipment.

Civilians in Germany have in general not been much affected, but an example of the careful attention which is being given to detail is afforded by the case of Captain Lovelace's fiancée, Miss Todd. Ordinarily there is no provision for fiancées to join their opposite numbers in BAOR, but Captain Lovelace has a great many influential friends, and Miss Todd, who is an extremely attractive girl, has spent several periods in Germany as governess to Major Manley's little boy, as Nannie to the family of Colonel Shephard, as private secretary to Mr. D'Arcy, the Kreis Resident Officer, and as cook to the chief of the Tramways and Miniature Railways Division of the Control Commission. A further application that she should be allowed to remain in Germany for another three months as butler in Captain Lovelace's C.O.'s house was returned by District Headquarters with a request for an

explanation in writing, and it has been decided that in view of this and of the general situation in Germany to-day it would be better if Miss Todd were to return to the U.K. forthwith. Captain Lovelace will join her on nineteen days' leave at the end of the month, to which period he will add an extra fortnight under the SEWLROM scheme, a month under the LILOP Scheme, a week's LOLLIPOP, ten days' LEMGO, two months' agricultural leave and forty-eight hours AWOL. This will see him over the difficult period of his marriage without the necessity of any special arrangements being made.

It must not be understood from all the above that there is any complacency or undue confidence among either the troops or the staff. On the contrary there has been a general acceleration of the pace of work everywhere, and the time taken for the officers of "A" Branch at this H.Q. to complete *The Times* crossword puzzle has been cut to thirty-five minutes. The rifle at Geradeaus Leave Centre has been pulled through and an indent submitted for a round of ammunition. The British Forces Network is to replace half an hour's swing music every week by military band music. On all sides one sees evidence of preparedness to meet whatever emergency may arise, and the soldiers themselves

are in great heart. A recent poll among the clerks of "C" Squadron of the Twenty-eighth Dragoons, who may rightly regard themselves as in the forefront of the forces of democracy, revealed that, in reply to the question whether they thought there would be a war, nil replied yes, nil replied no, and three replied "Don't know." The fourth was on leave, but Trooper Barrowboy, who happened to be in the office at the time looking up the regulations about the export of coffee from England to BAOR, volunteered to speak in his place.

His exact opinion was not clear, but he managed in the course of his expression of it to sell two bottles of "schnapps" obtained from beyond the Iron Curtain from the Russians, whom he described as "all right."

FENCING

There was a brilliant bout when Kovacs beat Vincenzo Pinton, the Italian ace. They each scored three hits, but Kovacs, attacking vigorously, twice pierced Pinton's defence to win.

After six laps Faanhof and Voorting were still setting a cracking pace, and with Johansson, had opened up a gap of nearly 3½ minutes.—*Liverpool paper*.

Without a button on the foil, it's dangerous.

IONICUS



"Look—one day he forgot to leave it!"

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"I suppose you've been closing the dollar gap, Fred"

★ Could we do with a longer sleeping week? ★

The Government urges us to work harder. And of course we're doing our best. But...!

Where are we to get the extra energy from?

Here we are, working on exports or coping with queues, and at the end of the day we're whacked. Some of us even wake tired! Oh, for some more energy!

What controls our stock of energy? Food and sleep. Food is rationed, sleep isn't. Could we do with a longer sleeping week?

Strangely enough, *long* sleep is not nearly so important as *deep* sleep.

Only deep sleep has the power to put back into your body the energy you use up during the day.

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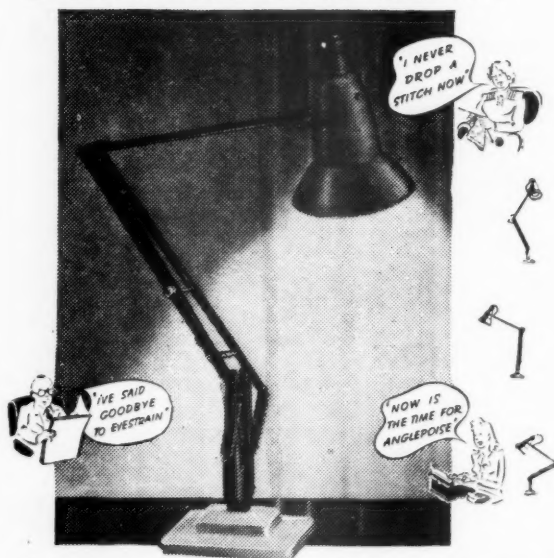
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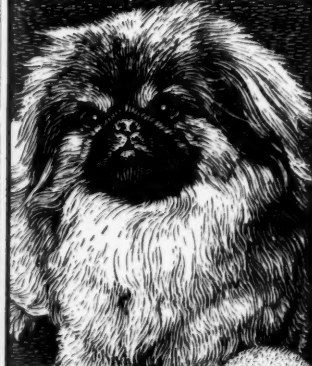
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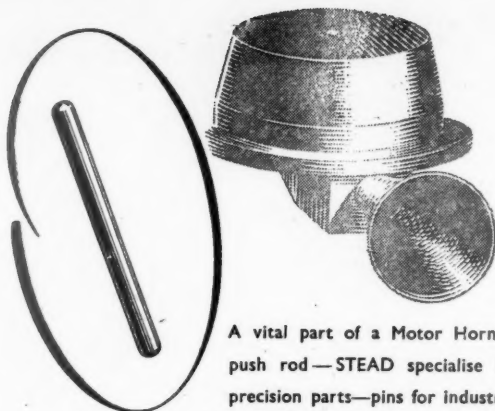
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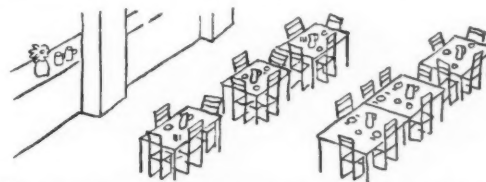
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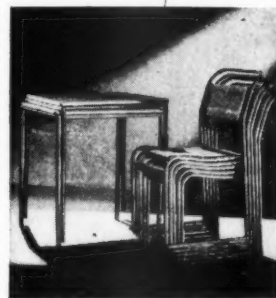
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CHAIRS**



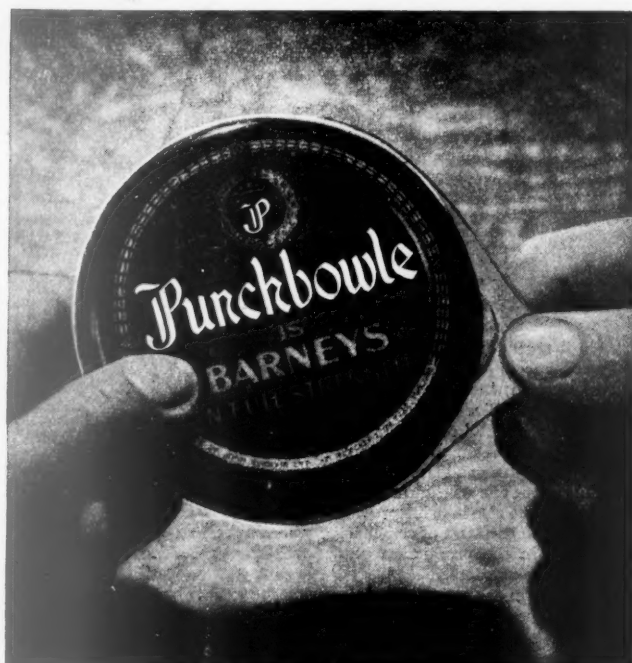
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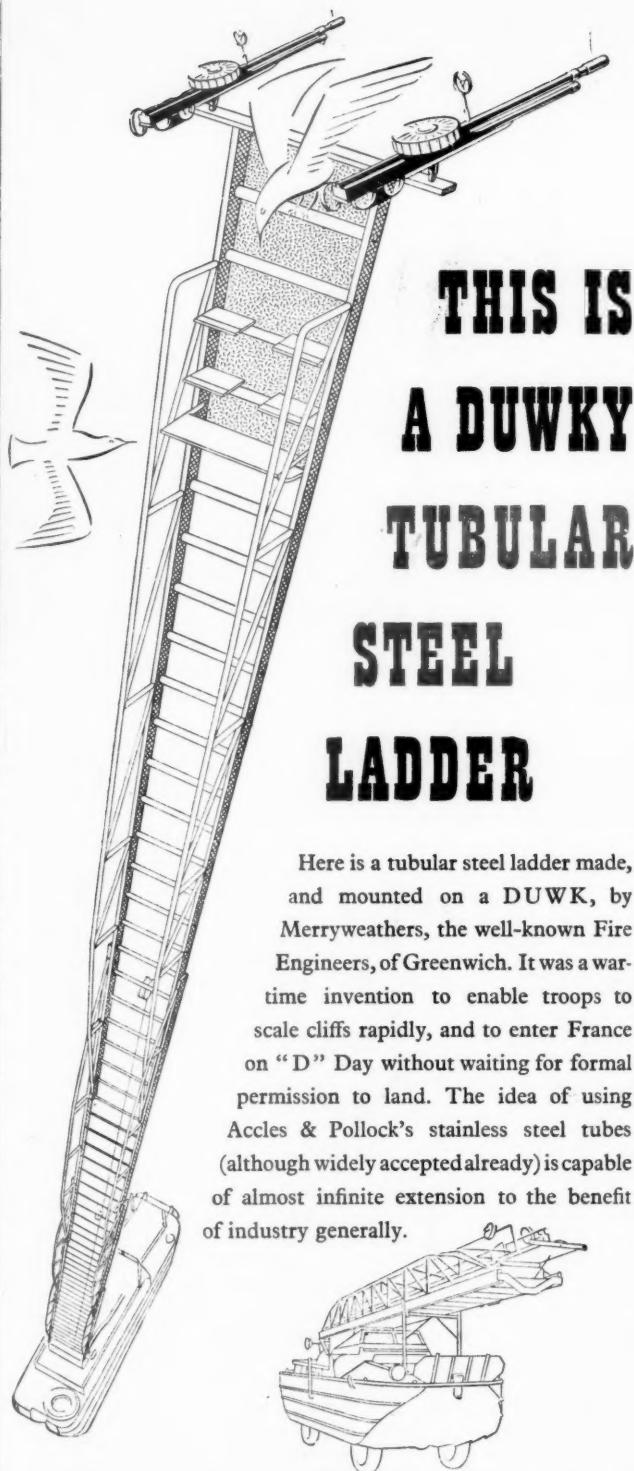
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